

Assessment Plan Feather River College

Assessment is ongoing, reporting is periodic.

Introduction

Feather River College (FRC) measures its success by the degree to which students learn. The College recognizes that learning requires more than memorizing facts or figures; it demands that students utilize their command of those facts and figures to solve problems, demonstrate skills and think critically about what they have learned. In the same way, FRC's faculty and staff recognize that measuring student learning is more than identifying patterns in course completion rates and GPAs; they are committed to thinking critically about how students learn and how each component of the College contributes to student learning.

Because of this commitment to student learning, FRC has developed processes to assess student learning that involve the entire campus and are integrated into broader campus planning. This assessment plan defines FRC's process for assessing student learning at all levels and describes how assessment results will be used to inform planning and resource allocation decisions at the college. Despite the many successes of student learning outcome (SLO) assessment at FRC over the past several years, it is the sentiment of the Student Learning Outcome Assessment Cycle Committee (SLOAC) that important steps still remain to better integrate assessment into campus processes and to further develop and document the reflective culture of assessment at the College. Specifically, two efforts seem to be central in this pursuit: (1) making explicit and important the role of SLO assessment in program planning and budget allocation, and (2) streamlining the assessment process to improve campus buy-in and interest.

I. Goals

The goal of SLO assessment is to make student learning and achievement central criteria in college decision-making. This process requires establishing goals for student learning, reflecting on how well the established goals were met, and making adjustments as needed to improve the learning experience for current and future students. Further, a well-functioning process will capture the progression of student learning over time.

Equally, it should be clear that SLO assessment is not:

- An end in itself or busy work that has no relation to teaching and learning.
- A means to evaluate individual faculty or staff.
- A way to impinge on academic freedom.
- A solution to every problem on campus or an answer to all questions about students and learning.

II. Evidence of Student Learning: Assessing Outcomes

The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle (SLOAC) is predicated upon FRC's ability to collect evidence of student learning. Assessment includes both qualitative and quantitative evidence of demonstrable student competency in skills, knowledge, and attitudes in an outcome area. This is done at the course, program, degree and certificate, student services, and institutional (college-wide) levels.

A. Course-Level Assessment

What is assessed? Each course in the FRC catalog that is offered in a predictable two-year rotation.

When is it assessed? Every course is assessed at least once every four years in conjunction with the comprehensive program review (CPR) cycle. The initial course-level SLO assessment (which includes all class sections of the course) provides benchmark data for subsequent course assessments. SLO assessments are due to the Office of Instruction within three weeks of the beginning of the subsequent term. For example, a course-level assessment for a course taught in the spring semester is due three weeks into the start of the subsequent fall semester.

Who completes the assessment? Full-time and associate faculty in their respective disciplines/programs, to be coordinated by full-time faculty when available.

What does the assessment include? Faculty submit the completed SLOAC form (available on the SLOAC webpage; S:\InstitutionalResearch\IRDatabases\SLODatabase). Although not strictly required, this assessment should include both qualitative and quantitative reflection. The webpage also includes assessment resources that provide ideas and best practices examples. Faculty may consult these ideas or use their own techniques best suited for assessing student learning in their courses.

B. Certificates/Degrees/Programs Assessment

What is assessed? SLOs for certificates, degrees, and programs.

When is it assessed? Certificate, degree, and program SLOACs are completed with the comprehensive review cycle, or every four years. When these are assessed, they are due during the spring term for both instructional and student services programs. (The Comprehensive Program Review calendar is available through the Institutional Research and Planning webpage.)

Who completes the assessment? Program leaders and faculty in the discipline/program areas.

What does the assessment include? Faculty complete the comprehensive program review (CPR) form (available on the Program Review website, <http://www.frc.edu/programreview/documents.cfm>). Certificate, degree, and program SLOACs may provide direct and indirect evidence gathered through rubric data, student interviews or surveys, a review and summation of course-level SLOACs (especially for low-unit certificates), and/or through the results of discussions among faculty and instructors in the program. Certificate, degree, and program SLOACs should include reflection on how well the program-level SLOs support college-wide SLOs (CWSLOs).

C. Student Learning and Support Services Assessment

What is assessed? Student learning and support activities SLOs (Student Services, Instructional Resource Center, Library)

When is it assessed? SLOs for the Library, the IRC, and Student Support Services are assessed every four years in concert with the comprehensive program review (CPR) cycle.

Who completes the assessment? Student Learning Services (Library, IRC) will be assessed by the faculty leaders in these areas. Student Support Services will be assessed by the Chief Student Services Officer in cooperation with staff members from Student Services.

What does the assessment include? Program leaders complete the comprehensive program review (CPR) form (on the Program Review website, <http://www.frc.edu/programreview/documents.cfm>). Student learning and support services program SLOACs may provide direct and indirect evidence gathered through service data, student interviews or surveys, and/or through the results of discussions among faculty and staff in the program. Student learning and support services program SLOACs should include reflection on how well the program-level SLOs support college-wide SLOs (CWSLOs).

D. College-Wide SLO Assessment

What is assessed? College-wide SLOs (CWSLOs)

When is it assessed? All CWSLOs are indirectly assessed annually, every spring through a student survey.

To promote direct assessment, three CWSLOs, identified as particularly measurable in the instructional setting, have rubrics that were created through an iterative process between full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and the SLOAC Committee. These rubrics are available on the SLOAC website for use by faculty in their classes. Faculty may use these rubrics in a number of ways, including communicating to students expectations for assignments, allowing students to review the work of peers, and/or as a grading instrument.

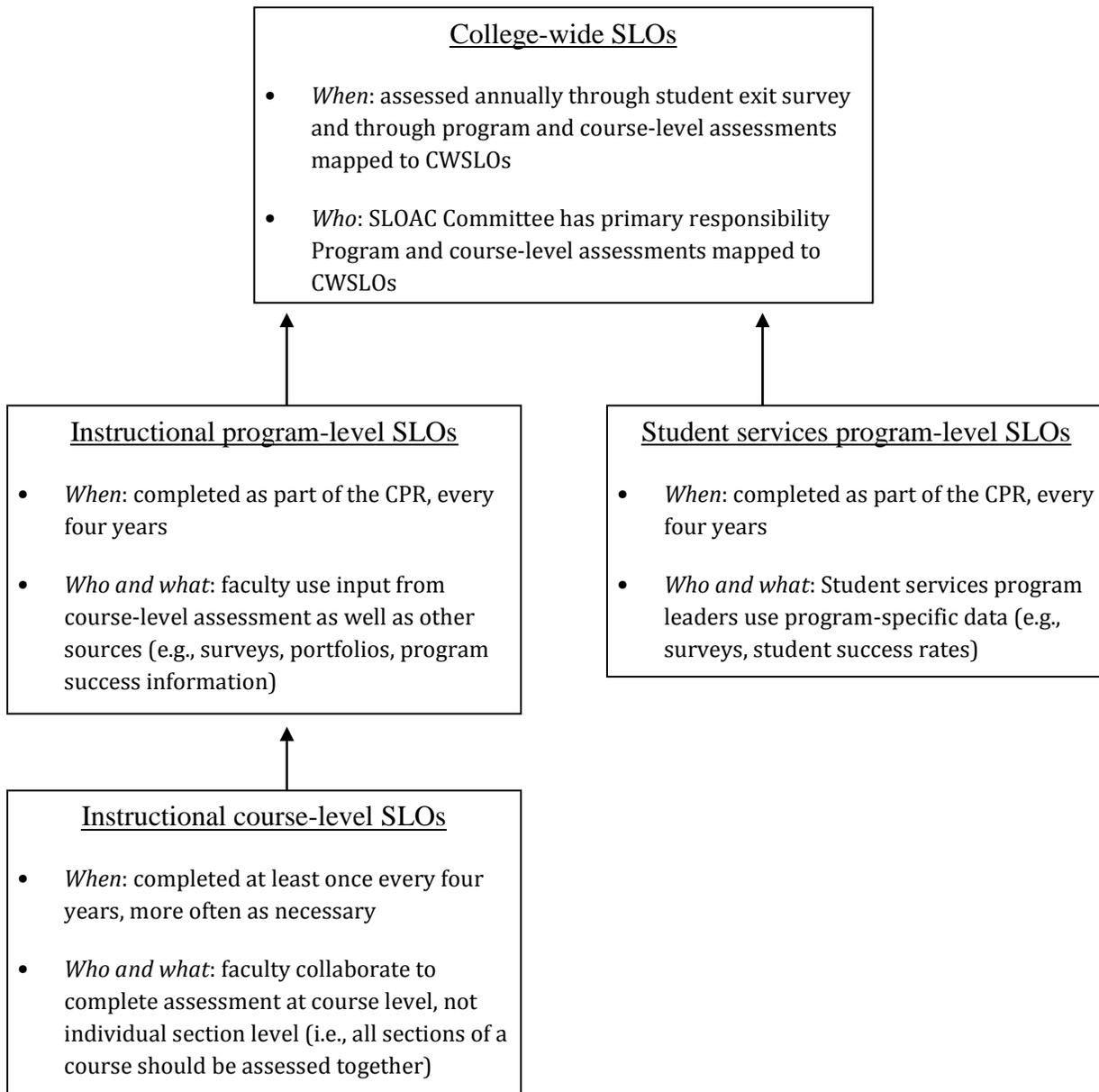
Through the assessment reporting tools, both instructional and student support course or program-level SLO assessments are tied to the CWSLOs.

Who completes the assessment? The annual survey of students is created, delivered, and compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning in May. Instructors using rubrics may include a reflection on the attainment of the CWSLOs in their course and program-level assessments. All employees who submit course or program-level SLOs provide an assessment of how student attainment of SLOs in their area reflects upon the CWSLOs.

What does the assessment include? The student survey is open to all students every spring, though results are filtered so focus is given to students completing a program of study through graduation or transfer. As an indirect assessment of all CWSLOs. Students are asked to reflect on how their learning and success around each CWSLO improved over the course of their studies and experiences at FRC.

Faculty-created rubrics for critical thinking, effective communication (oral and written), and information technology may be used to aid in directly assessing these three CWSLOs. Faculty may also use other resources or techniques to gather evidence of student learning of the CWSLO.

The linkage between course-level and program-level SLOs to CWSLOs occurs through the assessment process as a function of the database form used for assessment submission. In this process, employees link specific course and program-level SLOs to CWSLOs, using their assessment of student learning to provide evidence for how well the CWSLOs are being met.



III. Using Evidence to Improve Student Learning

Student learning is improved through both informal and formal mechanisms. Informally, campus employees constantly reflect upon their effectiveness in helping students learn and adjust their processes. This informal adjustment happens in an ongoing manner, and is reported on periodically in the established mechanisms with which employees reflect on their assessment of student learning (see Section II above). Formally, the campus is committed to improving student learning by tying planning and budgeting decisions to the assessment of student learning. As such, program-level resource requests are judged in part on the request's impact on student learning. The Strategic Planning Committee established this criterion for its review of annual program reviews (APRs) in September 2013.

A. Course-Level Assessment

The findings from course-level SLO assessment should be tied to planning requests that appear in the annual program reviews (APRs). These APRs are reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee as it prepares its annual recommendations to the Budget Committee. One of the criteria in this review is an objective's relation to improving student learning.

Additionally, faculty use the results of their SLO assessment to identify areas within their courses that should be modified to improve student learning, and may update course-level SLOs when their assessments indicate changes are appropriate (note: changes to SLOs must be recorded in the course outline of record, COR). Because this assessment occurs at the course level (and not individual section level), the results of this assessment are critical in providing quality assurance across all delivery modes for a given course (e.g., face-to-face, distance education). The identification of improvement areas occurs on the course-level SLO assessment report and the results from these reports are summarized by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and presented to the SLOAC Committee.

B. Certificates/Degrees/Programs Assessment

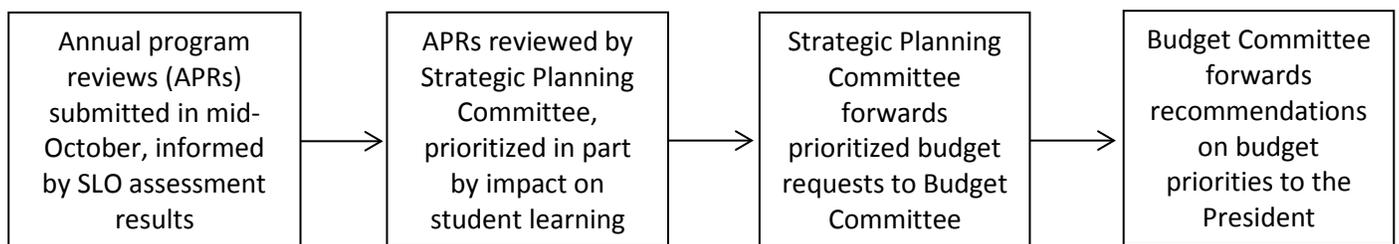
Program-level assessment includes the examination of degrees and certificates included in that program. This assessment occurs during the comprehensive program review (CPR) and should include a reflection on how course-level assessments fit broadly into the context of program health and planning, as well as how program-level instruction supports the college-wide SLOs. The results of program-level assessments are reviewed annually by the SLOAC Committee in a round-table discussion with all programs that have submitted CPRs in that year (typically 4-5 programs). Here, program leaders discuss their assessment successes, failures, and findings. This format provides a collaborative and constructive environment where program leaders may learn from each other and for the SLOAC Committee to receive feedback on the effectiveness of established assessment practices. As a response to the need to occasionally expedite changes to improve student learning, and to incentivize high-quality assessment, the SLOAC Committee uses this review to provide one-time "mini-grants" as funding becomes available to programs that clearly identify opportunities for improving student learning through the purchase of specific items.

C. Student Learning and Support Services Assessment

Student learning and support services are assessed in accordance with the CPR schedule. Here, program leaders reflect on the success of their program's ability to help students achieve the established outcomes, as well as how program-level activities support the college-wide SLOs. As is the case for the instructional program-level assessment, the results of this program-level assessment are reviewed annually by the SLOAC Committee in a round-table discussion with all programs that have submitted CPRs (typically 4-5 programs per year). Here, program leaders discuss their assessment successes, failures, and findings. This format provides a collaborative and constructive environment where program leaders may learn from each other and for the SLOAC Committee to receive feedback on the effectiveness of established assessment practices. As a response to the need to occasionally expedite changes to improve student learning, and to incentivize high-quality assessment, the SLOAC Committee uses this review to provide one-time "mini-grants" as funding becomes available to programs that clearly identify opportunities for improving student learning through the purchase of specific items.

D. College-Wide SLO Assessment

For course and program-level assessment, reporting responsibility falls primarily to program faculty and staff. At the college level, identification and analysis of assessment evidence occurs primarily within the SLOAC Committee. The SLOAC Committee uses the results from course and program-level assessment, survey information, and round-table discussions with program leaders to understand how well college-wide SLOs are being met. As appropriate, the SLOAC Committee then communicates with individuals, programs, and committees to search for solutions to identified shortcomings (e.g., revisions to college-wide SLOs).



IV. Reporting (Disseminating) Evidence and Results

Every fall semester, the SLOAC Committee will produce a brief report to the campus on noteworthy qualitative and quantitative aspects of the campus's assessment efforts. This report will include basic information on the number of course-level SLO assessments completed and will capture information on the nature of the changes being made across the campus to improve student learning. Additionally, it will include highlights from the meetings between the SLOAC Committee and the CPR submitters (see sections III.B, III.C), decisions on any awarded "mini-grants", and summary information from the student exit survey related to the assessment of CWSLOs that is completed at the end of every spring semester. This report will be mailed electronically and will be available on the SLOAC Committee's webpage.